



WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

Marketing is an essential part of growing a podiatry practice: it helps keep current patients returning and brings new patients through your doors. As practicing medicine faces new and increasing challenges, marketing effectively becomes all the more important. So it's a serious problem when hard-working podiatrists use marketing techniques that don't work—wasting valuable time, money, and effort.

That's why I have written this book. I am the founder and CEO of Top Practices, LLC, a company dedicated to helping medical professionals grow their private practices through effective marketing and efficient management. Through the Mastermind Group program, Top Practices has enabled hundreds of doctors—especially podiatrists—to achieve their goals by building and growing the practice they want, not just the practice that walks in the door.

I understand, from my own direct experience, the frustrations you face as a professional when it comes to your marketing. I know how expensive marketing can be and, like most professionals in your field, how you keep doing the same things year after year because you think it's what you're supposed to do, or that it's what everyone does. The worst part is you can't even tell if it's working for you.

Your marketing isn't working, but it doesn't have to be that way!

In this book, I'll explain some of the most common approaches to podiatry practice marketing and why they simply don't work. In addition, I'll walk you through the tried-and-true Top Practices' Four Pillars of Marketing. This approach has already transformed podiatry practices of all sizes around the country and even in Canada and Australia, so it can work for you, too.

I hope you find the information in this book enlightening and encouraging. Hundreds of podiatrists that I've coached over the years have discovered that practice marketing can be fun, creative, and rewarding when done right. If you read this book and have any additional questions, would like to discuss the topics I address, or are interested in trying a new approach to podiatry marketing, don't hesitate to contact Top Practices for more information. You can reach us by e-mailing Answers@TopPractices.com or by calling (717) 725-2679.

Dedicated to Your Success,



Rem Jackson
CEO of Top Practices, LLC
www.TopPractices.com





First, it's helpful to know what great podiatry practice marketing actually looks like. Effective practice marketing means you have a coordinated plan in place to reach both current and potential patients online, through local referral sources, through your database of contact information, and through community outreach and advertisements.

Your website is well-designed and easy to navigate, packed with educational information about the conditions you treat. It's also updated regularly with new articles or blogs. Your social media is branded for your practice, shares content from your website, and engages people in your community. You're staying on top of online reviews of your practice and all your online contact information is up-to-date and accurate.

At the same time, you go around to local referral sources like shoe stores, other medical practices, fitness centers, and more to build those relationships and provide them with referral materials. You're also maintaining a list of your current and potential patients' contact information so you can reach out to them regularly, whether through follow-up campaigns, e-mails, newsletters, or other marketing resources. You also regularly reach out to the community through health fairs, local events, and even traditional advertising at times.

As a result, people recognize your name and can find your contact information easily when they need to. They recognize you as someone who is trusted in your community and who really cares about people's health and well-being. Your current patients remember you, like you, trust you, and refer you to their friends and family. You have a steady stream of returning patients and new patients who found you online, or through a referral, or because they saw you at an event. Your waiting room is full of the kinds of patients you want to see, your bottom line is increasing, and you no longer have to stress about your business.

The unfortunate reality is that most podiatrists don't have this kind of effective marketing. Instead, they're all making similar costly mistakes.



UNDERESTIMATING THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE MARKETING

Far too many podiatrists fail to realize just how vital marketing is to building and growing your practice. It is easily one of the most important things you can do. After all, can you think of a better investment than investing in your own business? You are in a unique position as a business owner to directly influence your practice revenue by the efforts you put into your marketing.

Plain and simple, the health, growth, and sustainability of every practice require a steady flow of high-quality patients. This includes current patients “reactivating” and returning to you as well as new patients finding you. Counting on word-of-mouth recommendations from your current patients isn’t going to cut it when you need your patient base to grow. Without a sustained and intentional effort to grow the base, your practice will ultimately begin to slow down, level off, or follow a downward trend. By understanding marketing better, you put yourself into a position to see more patients that match your “perfect patient” profile.





FAILURE TO PLAN

A plan is essential for success. Throwing your name out there does very little—people are too busy and won't notice you. You **NEED** a plan so all your marketing works together. But more importantly, you need a plan to target the kinds of patients you want to see. After all, you can't develop a marketing plan (or purchase advertising media such as Google or Facebook ads, radio spots, or newspaper ads) without understanding where your practice is going and who you want to come in your doors to see you. What does your perfect patient look like? What do you want your practice to look like?

The correct answer to the question "why do you want to spend any money on marketing?" should not be, "more patients." Not drawing at least a mental picture of what it is you are after with your practice is like getting on an airplane and saying "take me anywhere, I don't care."

JUST REPEATING WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING

Most professionals think that copying what other doctors are doing with their marketing will get them a better result. After all, if everyone is doing it, it must work, right? That is rarely the case. Earl Nightingale, one of the world's foremost experts on what makes people successful, has some good advice for podiatrists who want to market their practices. To paraphrase him, if you wanted to learn a new business skill, and you had no mentor or guide you could trust, the best thing you could do was figure out what everyone else was doing and then *do the opposite*. The majority is, at best, average. So it is with marketing a podiatric practice.



TAKING ADVICE FROM THE WRONG PEOPLE— THOSE WHO ARE SELLING IT

Another name for this is being an advertising “victim.” The problem is that most doctors don’t think about their advertising and marketing plan until the 30 minutes or so before a representative of some marketing firm comes walking through the door. They don’t do any independent research or study. They follow the crowd because “it must be working or everyone else wouldn’t be doing it”. If it doesn’t work for them, they just take the advertising representative’s advice to buy more online ad space or purchase a new website or, even worse, buy a list of contacts in your area to spam with e-mails or print mail. If they’re selling an expensive marketing tool or product, be careful what advice you follow.

IGNORING THE GOLD IN YOUR PRACTICE RIGHT NOW

It costs at least ten times as much to obtain new patients as it does to keep in contact with existing and inactive patients as well as everyone else who contacts you for something. Too many doctors are willing to spend thousands on internet marketing and ad space and radio spots while ignoring completely those who they already have some relationship with.

Here's the truth: your files are filled with names of folks who know you. Many of them are people who come to you again and again. Others are people who used to come to you, but have gotten busy and since forgotten to make an appointment. Many are new patients who came in, got treated, and then disappeared into your files, never to be heard from again. All of these people present a unique opportunity for marketing, since they already know you and, in many cases, like you, trust you, and would come to you again if they remembered to. Connect with inactive patients to remind them to return. Communicate with active patients about new procedures that they (or someone for whom they help make medical decisions) may need.

You should also have contact information in your list from potential patients who reached out to you. Maybe they used the contact form on your website, or requested a free offer or promotion you have, or met with you and asked for more information at a community event. Wherever they came from, these are people who have explicitly expressed interest in you and what you do. Communicating to them is vital for being there through their whole process of deciding to get help for their problems.

Developing an ongoing, educational, and AUTOMATED conversation with your patients and your entire list is critical. It's one of the most cost-effective ways of building and growing your practice, so you don't have to rely exclusively on always attracting brand-new patients.





FAILING TO MEASURE RESULTS

Do this test - ask anyone who spends a lot of money on advertising *exactly* how much revenue is generated by their efforts. This is called ROI, or your Return On Investment. Far too many people invest heavily in marketing efforts like online advertising, newspaper spots, and even billboards or radio ads, but have no way of know whether or not their efforts are worthwhile. They don't have a way to measure how many people are actually coming to their practice because of their investment.

This often means they're spending far more money than those marketing efforts are generating back for them, but they have no way to know. They're marketing blindly, spending money and hoping it produces results instead of knowing that it does. Think of it this way: would you buy a mutual fund without demanding a specific accounting of actual results?

NEVER ASKING FOR REFERRALS

The best patients come to you through referrals. They heard about you from a trusted source and area already ready to believe you can help them. However, not all of your patients and even outside referral sources know how or when to recommend you to others, strange as it may seem.

Professionals who really understand marketing have figured out ways to have current friends and clients refer new consumers to them **BEFORE** they need their services. You need a plan in place to ask them to make those referrals or leave positive online reviews.

PLAYING A SHOUTING GAME

Some doctors try to differentiate themselves online or in other marketing venues by simply spending more money to “shout louder”. This is accomplished by buying more ad space, posting more random stuff to social media, and generally trying to get their name everywhere, no matter the cost or the audience it will reach.

The three-fold problem of this approach is that (1) it’s an expensive way to run a business and (2) there will always be someone who can spend more than you can (3) marketing isn’t actually about you. It’s about entering into the conversation and concerns already going on in people’s minds. People are busy and don’t care about how experienced or high-tech you are *unless you can solve their problems*. It’s only when they hear you talking about their problems that they stop and listen to how you can help.

PUTTING ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET

“One” is a very dangerous number. There are many different types of media and marketing venues out there. Focusing on one at the expense of the others sharply limits your reach. This is most common with podiatrists’ internet marketing. The internet is the “big thing” in marketing now, so everyone is investing heavily in it—but neglect other media at the same time. Doing this means you’re missing opportunities to connect to people who may otherwise never find your website or have no interest in your social media. The key is to choose strategies that are relatively easy to test and then measure results.



TRENDS IN PODIATRY MARKETING

If you look at all the podiatrists who are trying to market their practices online or through some kind of advertising, they all pretty much sound the same. There are certain trends that stick and everyone ends up copying. The problem with this, though, is that everyone sounds alike and seem interchangeable. There's no reason for patients to pick one over the other.

Most of the messages podiatrists are sharing have very little meaning, too. Just check out these popular (and highly generalized) statements:



There's nothing wrong with any of these statements per se, but there's absolutely nothing that distinguishes one practice from another when they all say things like this and variations on these themes. It's good you're board certified, but so is everyone else. It's great you accept most insurances, but so does everyone else. **It's wonderful you provide compassion and a personalized touch, but so does everyone else.** These generalizations are not what convince patient to come to your office.

People expect their treatment to be personalized and compassionate. Practically every practice accepts "most" insurances. The fact that a podiatrist treats and performs surgery on the feet and ankles isn't a revelation to anyone. As for being board certified, while you and other professionals know how hard you worked to earn that certification, most patients aren't sure what it means and don't really care, anyway.

The point is that all podiatrists should be able to make the above statements. Listing these as "benefits" for coming to your practice on your website, social media, ads, and everywhere else tells people nothing about you. The statements become meaningless.

So how do you differentiate yourself? How do you stand out in the crowd? How do you reach patients through every possible venue while targeting your message to the kinds of patients you want to see in your practice?

TOP PRACTICES' FOUR PILLARS SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE PODIATRY MARKETING

Most podiatry marketing is getting important aspects wrong and making serious mistakes that cost you time, money, and energy. You need an alternative. Over the years, our team at Top Practices has developed an effective approach that enables you to make the most of every possible venue for reaching out to new and returning patients: the Four Pillars of Marketing.

The **Four Pillars of Marketing** are the four ways you can target and connect to current and potential patients. They are the only four ways patients find you when looking for someone to help solve their problems. They also enable you to tailor your message and differentiate yourself from the crowd. These four pillars are:





WEB MARKETING

This is all the marketing you do online. Your website, your social media, your ranking on pages of search results when people Google foot pain issues, your location on Google maps, your internet reviews, everything—all of it falls under web marketing. The internet is an integrated part of everyone's lives now, particularly with smart phones enabling people to go online anywhere. Marketing online allows you to meet people where they will already be looking for information.



REFERRAL (SHOE-LEATHER) MARKETING

This includes all the referrals you get from professional and related sources. When the shoe store a few blocks away, or the cardiologist down the street, or the local fitness center all send people your way, they are providing high-quality referrals. They almost never do this on their own, however. You have to develop *and maintain* a relationship with these sources so they like you, trust you, and see a reason to refer others to you.



INTERNAL MARKETING

This involves marketing to your “list.” It enables you to connect and build relationships with your active, inactive, and potential patients who have given you their contact information. You’re able to send periodic updates, reminders to make appointments, educational information, and other resources so people remember who you are and feel that you care enough about them to stay in touch.



EXTERNAL MARKETING

This marketing involves what many people consider “traditional methods.” It’s the least targeted approach, but it allows you to reach people in your community who might not find you other ways. It can include sponsoring sports teams or events, hosting booths at health fairs, using posters or billboards, purchasing radio or TV spots, submitting articles or press releases to print sources, and more.



FOUR TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND


Put together, these four pillars allow you to reach out to your community and target your ideal patients: the people you want to see more of in your office who really would benefit from your services. As you do so, though, there are a few tips to keep in mind:

BE DIFFERENT

Here's the truth: it's really difficult to get patients' and potential patients' attention for two key reasons: 1) There's no real difference between competitors 2) They're too busy to pay attention to you.

Your potential patients are hearing the exact same messages from everyone: all about your great facilities, years of experience, and so on. Since all the generalizations about how great you are all sound the same, people are left falling back on other methods to decide who to see. Usually they ask their friends and family for recommendations, check your reviews online, or compare prices. They have absolutely no motivation to pick you over the guy down the street.

Worse than that, however, is the fact that most people are simply ignoring you. They aren't being cruel. They're just too busy and wondering "What's in it for me?" They don't care about how great your practice is, how experienced you are, or the amazing and cutting-edge technology you've added in the last year. They're paying attention to their own problems. They only start listening when you talk about their problems and how you can help.



The bottom line is that you need speak to the concerns your patients already have and learn how to differentiate your voice from your competitors in all four pillars of your marketing.

PROVOKE A RESPONSE

Traditional marketing efforts typically fail because they don't grab people's attention (by all sounding the same and speaking about the wrong things). But they also fail because they don't provoke people to respond. No matter how well constructed and branded your marketing message is, most people forget about you within a day. Then, when they decide to do something about their foot issues, they can't remember your name.

Even your current patients have this problem. They may love you and think you walk on water, but a few months down the road, when they're busy worrying about other problems, they will forget you. It's not on purpose. Their minds are simply too full of other things they need to remember.

I am a perfect example of this: in my late thirties, I began to have foot pain issues. I didn't know why, but I knew I was having trouble walking and standing for hours at a time for expositions and conferences. I assumed (correctly) that losing weight would help, but I decided to visit my local podiatrist to see if he could help as well. And help he did! He prescribed custom orthotics that gave me back 90% of the functionality in my feet that I needed. I owe that doctor so much. I would recommend him to anyone—if I could only remember his name.

Provoking a response, however, gets people to figuratively raise their hands and take action by providing you with something, usually a way to contact them again. This allows you to then continue to connect with that person through a variety of media so you can show them, again and again, how you care and can help fix their problems. When the time comes and they're ready to commit to getting help or want to refer you to others, they've had constant reminders that you are there. Newsletters, free offers, and related campaigns in your web and internal marketing are the best way to provoke this kind of response, though you can use them in every one of the four pillars.



CAPTURE YOUR LIST!

Provoking this kind of response *only* works if you have a way to capture people's contact information in a list. You need an organized, automated database to continually connect with people over time. See, people are rarely ready to make an appointment the first time they seek you out. Even if they respond and "raise their hands" so you can continue to connect with them through various media, most people take months to decide to do something about their problems. During that decision-making process, continued contact is especially crucial.

"Traditional" marketing is always a one-off event. Every time you use it, it's more money and effort. This is certainly worth your while, but you get a much higher return on your investment when you choose methods like free offers that provoke a response and then provide you with a way to stay in touch. This is capturing your list, and it enables you to spread out single marketing efforts over time, rather than through one-off events. You can automate this process through campaigns as well, so you don't have to worry about it getting done or being forgotten. This is the hallmark of your internal marketing, though it also impacts your web marketing and more.

TARGET AND EDUCATE

One of the most effective tools for marketing a podiatry practice is education. Educating your patients enables you to provide something of value to people who are interested in what you can do, as well as showcase that you both know what you're talking about and can solve their problems. It also allows you to target people who are suffering from foot and ankle problems. After all, only people who are struggling with heel pain will find an article on the topic interesting. If someone is looking for information on something like knee pain, they won't pay attention to you—but the kinds of patients you want to see, the patients who are suffering from heel pain, will be looking for more information about their problem. They will notice the doctor who educates them about not only their issues but also their options for eliminating the problem.

Educational efforts should touch every area of your marketing, from your website to your social media posts to the free offers you provide to help provoke a response and capture your list. This kind of marketing in all four of your pillars also helps you be different and stand out from the crowd of generalities.



FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope the information in this publication has been helpful for you. My goal is to provide you with the information you need to be able to take the right actions to better market your podiatry practice. You can market effectively and grow your practice through your efforts.

I also wanted to demonstrate just how Top Practices helps podiatry practices of all kinds succeed through effective marketing. Since we started in 2007, we've seen hundreds of podiatrists across North America and even in Australia grow and achieve their goals through using the Four Pillars and investing in their marketing. Members in our Mastermind Group have learned and implemented a wide variety of skills, strategies, and techniques to be able to be different, provoke a response, capture their lists, and target and educate patients through web, referral, internal, and external marketing sources—all from the very best people in the field.

You don't have to take my word for it, though. Here what some of our members have to say:

I had the offer to join a large doctor group and give up on owning my own practice. My friends all said to do it, this is the way of the future, private practice is dead. And things were really flat for a few months. I really had to go one of two directions: I can join up with this other group, or I can go with Rem and really make this work. I had to look down the road and ask where I could see myself in five years. And I knew I wouldn't be happy in a larger group.

"I have no regrets. I made the right decision to do more. We really tiptoed into this stuff like it was ice cold water, but it's really nothing but a big warm 'hot tub' for us now!"

Corey Fox, DPM - Massapequa, NY

Well I'd tell them, if I was first in practice, and I'd just started my practice, I would immediately sign up for Top Practices. It would be no hesitation. Because I look back, at—you know, I've been in practice for many years—and if I'd had these resources back then, it would have made my life a lot easier to get to where I am right now. And shortly—as soon as I hired an office manager, I'd sign up for the Virtual Practice Management, so the office manager doesn't have to learn by her mistakes, or his mistakes. They'd have somebody that has the blueprint for you to be successful. When you join Top Practices and you follow their direction, there's no way you could fail. So I'd tell them don't hesitate. Sign up right now."

Kevin Molan, DPM - Charlotte, NC

Top Practices has been the single best thing I have done for my Podiatry Practice – ever.

“Two years ago, my revenue started dropping and I just couldn’t figure out why. Increasingly, I found myself putting in longer and longer hours without deriving any benefit. Even worse, the enthusiasm I had previously experienced in providing patient care and managing my practice was at an all-time low. Fortunately, I met Rem Jackson and became a member of Top Practices. For me, Top Practices has been nothing short of a miracle, catapulting my practice revenue and enthusiasm to levels I didn’t even know were possible. During the 1st year of being a Top Practices member, my revenue increased 20% from the prior year and this year I am on track to increase revenue over 35% from last year. Thanks to Rem and Top Practices I am on track to create the multi-million dollar practice I knew was possible, but didn’t know how to get to.”

Jenny Sanders, DPM - San Francisco, CA

My life has changed dramatically since my first Top Practices Summit in Fall 2012. My mindset is clear and I am purposely working toward my goals, both personal and professional.

“What I like most about having Rem Jackson as a coach for my practice is accountability. I am encouraged every time I speak with Rem - he always has insights or information that is useful in helping me focus and it’s great to have another set of eyes looking at our practice’s metrics - it keeps us honest with ourselves!”

Melissa Lockwood, DPM, Bloomington, IL

[Membership] is BY FAR the best marketing move I ever made. My business has grown exponentially and I have added another associate and probably a new location soon, all while working smarter, not harder. Rem’s ideas and energy are contagious, and the attention to every detail is incredible. He will take you to a new level, IF you are willing to put in the time/effort. My only regret is in waiting so long to join after meeting Rem and seeing the program in action. Do it! You won’t be sorry.”

Scott Schulman, DPM - Indianapolis, IN

Being part of the Top Practices family has not only made me a better podiatrist and business owner, but it has allowed me to become a better father and husband because my head is now back in the game. Thanks Rem and the Top Practices Team. "

Tyson Franklin, Proarch Podiatry – Queensland, Australia

1. I loved all of the awesome ideas to improve myself and my practice. It was overwhelming until Rem laid out the blueprints for how to implement it. 2. Being able to mastermind with those podiatrists who have already accomplished your goals. 3. Finding an accountability partner."

John DePalma, DPM – Medford, NJ

Working with Top Practices has basically changed our life in podiatry. When we first began working with Rem, we had reached the depression component that's involved with podiatry. Where you don't want to do it anymore, you're looking for other alternatives, you're looking to get out of podiatry, and considering selling the practice. So, we were at pretty much a low point in podiatry practice. I think some of the first things that Top Practices brought to us was a positive mental attitude about the profession, and how we could actually improve financially, which was our biggest issue at the period of time when we went with Top Practices. Top Practices has taught us how to more effectively market. To the point that we were having, in one of our offices, a hard time filling our schedule. The other office was fairly full. But now we have a 6-8 week backed-up list to see us. To the point where now we are bringing on an associate doctor earlier in our business plan than we ever anticipated it, to be able to handle the supply and demand. We've gone from a practice that was making about, from a gross income, where we were struggling with two offices, we were making about \$500,000 a year. With the help of Top Practices now, we—with one practitioner, that's just me right now—we are now just a little above 1.3 million. And that's been within a year and a half. And our goal for this year—after we just finished our 12-week planning meeting—is 1.65 million. I think we'll probably achieve that earlier than our goal, based on where we are with our business plan now. And that's with a new associate too! If you don't take advantage of the fact you can talk to Rem at no cost about your practice, then you don't deserve to be a podiatrist. You need to be smart about this. You work your whole life to become a podiatrist, and before you throw the towel in, I would at least talk to Rem. Because I can tell you right now that was a big turning point for me. One of the things that's very impressive about Rem and all of the other colleagues within Top Practices is that they are very busy people. Rem is very busy. Tina is very busy. Peter is very busy. But they make it seem like you are the only customer there. They make time for you. Where you would think you'd have to get on a schedule and be seen in five or six weeks, no. They make time for you. They even do it, like, the next day, or even that day sometimes. For people to be that busy and to be accessible, is extremely impressive."

Leland Gilmore, DPM - Alexandria, VA

You can do this, too. You can transform your marketing to transform your practice. Our Mastermind Group will help inoculate you against making those common marketing mistakes as you learn and invest in methods and strategies that really work, all while pushing you to reach your goals. Our many other programs can help you quickly implement strategies in the four pillars, particularly where you may struggle, such as with internet or internal marketing. In a short time, you won't even recognize your practice and your marketing plan. The previous frustrations and headaches of practice marketing will be far behind you.

If you're interested in this, now is the time to begin. Don't put it off any longer. Contact Top Practices for more information to get started today.

Dedicated to your success,



Rem Jackson
CEO and Owner of Top Practices

P.S. If you want to know everything you need to know about the Top Practices Marketing Mastermind Group, just go to www.TopPractices.com where you can learn exactly how it works. I'm sincerely looking forward to the chance to speak to you in the near future. Answers@TopPractices.com • (717) 725-2679

